

OUR IMPACT IN 2024



HELVETAS
BANGLADESH

WHO WE ARE

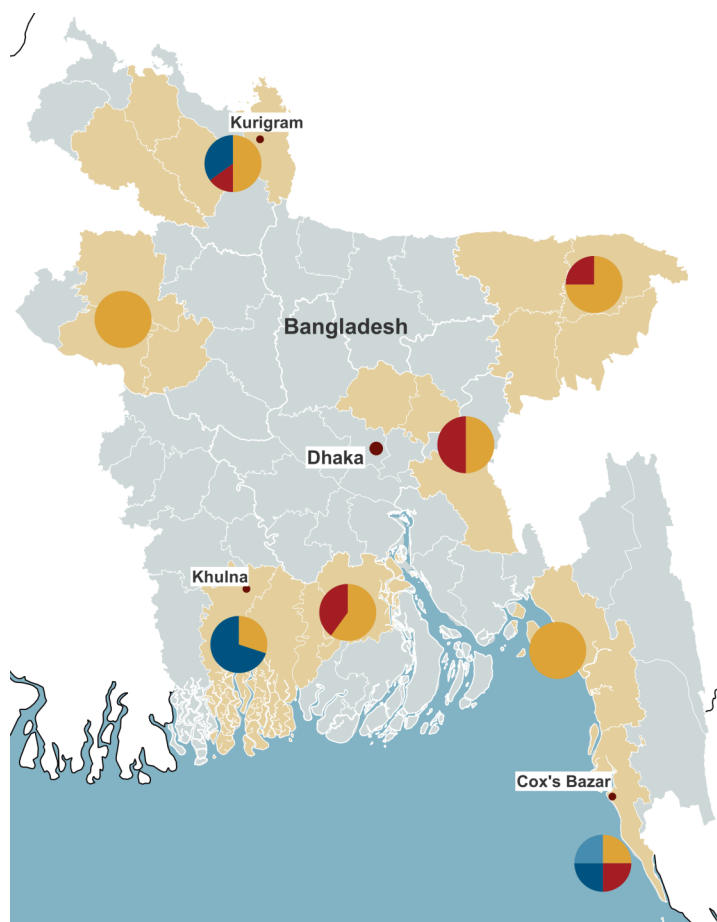
Helvetas is an independent Swiss development organization that is sharing capacity in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. We started our activities in Bangladesh in 2000, and we are currently active in large parts of the country to promote sustainable and inclusive development, resilience to climate change, safe and informed migration, and good governance.

We implement development projects in the areas of water, food and climate, education, jobs and private

sector development, governance, gender and social equity. Helvetas also provides humanitarian assistance and emergency response after disasters. We promote solidarity in spirit and in action and take part in the ongoing developmental policy dialogue.

Helvetas works in partnership with civil society organisations, government actors and the private sector to reinforce their autonomy and strengthen local ownership of social and economic development.

OUR WORK AND EXPERTISE



SKILLS, JOBS AND INCOME

- Market system development (MSD)
- Local Service Provision (LSP)
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

N. PROJECTS: 4

WATER, FOOD AND CLIMATE

- Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)
- Loss and damage
- Climate justice
- Inclusive WASH
- Disaster Risk Reduction (DDR)

N. PROJECTS: 2

VOICE, INCLUSION AND COHESION

- Empowerment of communities (especially women and youth)
- Participation and access to information
- Capacity building of local authorities
- Accountability and advocacy
- Safe Migration

N. PROJECTS: 3

HUMANITARIAN AND EMERGENCY INTERVENTION

- Food security and nutrition
- Protection
- Livelihoods improvement
- Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)
- Nexus: short term emergency relief actions;
- Social cohesion
- Emergency response to natural disasters

N. PROJECTS: 2

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024



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In 2024, Bangladesh was shaken by massive protests and violence that led to the resignation of the prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, and her departure from the country. The interim government led by Nobel laureate Mohammed Yunus started a political and economic reform season in preparation for the next elections.

Helvetas Bangladesh continued to support public and private system actors to strengthen their capacities and promote a better accountability towards the left-behind people and communities. An engagement emphasised in the new Country Programme Strategy 2024-2027 that organizes our intervention in three working areas:

1. **Water, Food and Climate (WFC):** in the past year we focused on ensuring access to safe drinking water,

raising awareness among local Community Based Organisation (CBOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) about their water rights, and promoting the Loss and Damage intervention framework.

2. **Skills, Jobs and Income (SJI):** we engaged in promoting the importance and improving the availability and affordability of nutritious food among primary stakeholders; creating an inclusive and supportive food system; strengthening agricultural value chains; promoting off-farm initiatives; and developing skills and employment opportunities.

3. **Voice, Inclusion and Cohesion (VIC):** we advocate for inclusive policies and equitable budget allocations in urban and rural local governance, as well as sharing capacity for safer migration.

1,803

organisations have
been strengthen
to empower
marginalized
communities

127,700

people have
improved their
sustainable
agricultural
practices

46,800

migrants and their
family members
received training on
safe migration,
civic rights and
governance

WATER, FOOD AND CLIMATE

Our commitment to build the resilience of the most climate vulnerable communities in the north and south western coastal belt of Bangladesh is based on enhancing adaptation and risk management, promoting climate justice and governance, ensuring inclusive water and sanitation. In 2024 we worked specifically on the following components:

Adaptation and Disaster Risk Management

- Identify and assess existing Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) technologies and practices, ensuring inclusivity of vulnerable populations, including persons with disabilities.
- Establish collaboration mechanisms with Disaster Management Committees (DMCs) at the local level and develop training materials to strengthen disaster preparedness and response capacities.
- Develop and disseminate Information Education and Communication materials to enhance community awareness on disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.

Climate Justice and Governance

We developed a framework and action plan to support climate-induced migrants in both origin and destination areas based in assessing risks, opportunities and challenges of their choices. Moreover, we assessed loss and damage in the southern coastal belt of Bangladesh

and formulated a Loss and Damage Intervention Framework to guide project activities.

Inclusive Water Access

We mapped sweet water ponds and assessed relevant laws, environmental conditions, and stakeholders to inform an advocacy strategy for improving access to these water sources.

We constructed **63 water points** and trained 63 Water User Groups (WUGs), 63 Water User Committees (WUCs), **332 Health Village Group (HVG) members**, 110 caretakers, and five school brigades on water safety, hygiene, and maintenance. We also supported hygiene and sanitation business to improve access to those services in target communities.

STRENGTHENING THE RIGHT TO WATER

Through our programme and projects we work with communities, governments and local authorities to strengthen social, economic, political, environmental and cultural rights (**Human rights base approach**). In 2024 we trained **355 individuals** (95 men, 260 women) on Citizens' Rights and Access to Common Water Resources to strengthen their capacity to advocate for improved water governance at the local level.

We also mobilized and supported **15 local authorities** to improve their capacities for WASH service delivery.

4,147
households
have clean
safe water
and **1,474**
individuals,
including teachers
and students
in **5** schools,
have access
to improved
WASH facilities



Suimany Akhter (left), Satabdi Mahanto
and Aishwarya Adhikary (right)
at Sri Sri Gopal Chand High School

SKILLS, JOBS AND INCOME

© Qazi Shamim Hasan



105,404 people
have participated in technical
skills and entrepreneurship
training and business
development activities

Masuda Katun
was trained in packaging
at Rani Food Industries

Helvetas is committed to support the country efforts for a sustainable development by reinforcing private sector and increasing job opportunities especially for left behind young people, and women.

Private sector development

In 2024 **Local Service Providers (LSP)** supported and trained **34,988 people (73% female)**.

This approach proved particularly effective to widen access to information and services for farmers, but also to offer business and empowerment opportunities across marginalized communities. Women are playing an increasing leadership role as LSP and within producers groups, improving their livelihoods and overcoming social and cultural constraints.

The establishment of collection points (aggregation centres), managed by LSP, encouraged small farmers to sell their surplus at a fair price and distribute those products in the project area, ensuring the availability of safe nutritious food.

Skills development and employment

In 2024 we engaged in fostering opportunities for left behind women and young people in

agro-food processing sector. The focus was on scaling skill development training across all partner factories, develop new products and their marketing/branding strategies, and improving the training program in the baking and packaging technical domain.

Since both, eligible participants and the private sector, found it difficult to engage in long duration training due to time constraints and organizational challenges, we developed an accelerated on-the-job training, allowing for quicker absorption of trained workers in their new job functions.

Green Economy

Helvetas promoted selected innovative low-cost, energy savings and climate-smart technologies which led to a reduction in the use of chemical inputs contributing to limit health risks. We also promoted homestead gardening in rural and urban areas introducing low-cost organic agricultural practices, thus increasing the availability of nutritious and healthy food.

29,700 vulnerable
urban consumers from
4,570 households are
leading active and
healthy lives through
inclusive and supportive
food systems

[Read the inspiring
story of the LSP
Jasmine Akter](#)



VOICE, INCLUSION AND COHESION

Helvetas Bangladesh is promoting good governance, and social accountability, fostering civic engagement, and advocating for women, youth, and marginalized groups.

Governance and Civic Space

We support women and communities to advocate for inclusive policies and equitable budget allocations. By strengthening citizens' ability to voice their rights, we enhance the accountability of local authorities. At the same time, Helvetas collaborates with government institutions at all levels to build their capacity for more inclusive and responsive service delivery. In 2024 **more than 300,000 people** were empowered to claim rights and have access to improved inclusive public services, 62% were women and other disadvantaged groups. **119 CSOs and their networks** were supported in their advocacy and policy dialogue from local to national

level. Additionally, 540 Union Parishads have increased their capacities in participatory planning and citizen-centric services for accountable and inclusive governance.

Migration

We aim to improve the well-being of migrants through safer migration practices and strengthened service delivery at the different stages of pre-departure, during migration to countries of destination and upon return and re-integration to Bangladesh. In 2024, 363 people (12% women) had safer migration with the support of local authorities; **46,882 migrants and their families (50% were women) have been supported** through interventions on informative migration. Additionally, 138 Union Parishads and 87 Migration Forums have been accompanied to integrate safe migration provisions into their development plans.

23 youth groups with a total of 290 members (63% female) are active in **Rohingya and host communities** to raise awareness on early marriages and disaster risks prevention

Youth group, camp 11
Ukhia, Cox's Bazar

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YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Young people can be agents of positive change in their societies if they live in an environment that values them, provides them with safe spaces to express themselves and actively seizes social, economic and political opportunities. In 2024 **17 youth forums have been formed, including 527 enthusiastic youth members (43% women)** who showed a high interest in protecting the ecology of Sundarbans.

In Cox's Bazar 23 youth groups, each comprising 12 to 15 members, are actively participated in training sessions on nutrition, food hygiene, and leadership skills. Their involvement extended to community-led activities

such as street cleaning, awareness campaigns, and peer education, underscoring their capacity to drive meaningful social impact. Their peer-led approach has proven instrumental in fostering trust, encouraging behaviour change, and inspiring community-wide participation.

The engagement of these groups has proven to have lasting impacts. Young people who participated in a past project on preventing violent extremism played a crucial role in promoting trust and cohesion in their communities during the 2024 uprising.

[Read how young people stepped up to promote trust](#)



HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION



Over 800 members of the Rohingya community participated in fire preparedness activities

© Sumayea Rahman

Since 2017, Helvetas has been present in Cox's Bazar, to respond to the ongoing protracted Rohingya crisis. In 2024, we started to pilot small direct own funded interventions in the Rohingya and host communities to strengthen our expertise on nexus approach and we provided emergency support to families affected by floods. We supported **11,000 Rohingya households to produce vegetables in the camps**. Moreover, we worked with national partners to share capacities on how to respond to onset emergencies and actively participated in different clusters, coordination, and networking forums at various levels.

Supporting communities to mitigate risks

In Cox's Bazar we work with communities to enhance their ability to assess and prevent risks. In particular we supported Rohingya communities to develop hazard maps, identifying areas prone to floods and landslides in the camps.

We conducted community risks assessment in the host communities and coordinated meetings with Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMC) to strengthen community's early warning system and encourage the development of Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP). We also trained School Disaster Management Committee (SDMC) and student council members on Multi Hazard Disaster Management and worked to raise awareness on fire-related incidents and cyclones.

To reduce risks and enhance resilience to climate change we engaged Rohingya and host communities through **Cash for Work (CfW)** activities. Key interventions included slope stabilization for landslide mitigation, reforestation efforts, and the rehabilitation of key infrastructures such as drainage systems and WASH facilities. Additionally, waste management and drainage cleaning activities were carried out to improve environmental conditions in camp areas, while in host communities project participants contributed to the construction and rehabilitation of school infrastructures in line with the Risk Reduction Action Plan (RRAP).

Strengthening social cohesion

Youth groups from Rohingya and host communities were supported to perform joint activities such as Interactive Popular Theater to raise awareness on early marriage. This experience helped to create bonds among young people and enhance mutual understanding.

Emergency Relief

In the aftermath of the severe flash flood that affected the East of Bangladesh in August 2024, Helvetas mobilized resources to provide emergency support to 800 flood affected households in collaboration with upazila administrations in the Comilla and Chattogram districts. In Cox's Bazar district, 400 families received dry food and non-food items.

OUR PARTNERSHIPS



© KM Asad

Tahmina Khatun, member of Aparajita network in Rangpur, explaining to local authorities women's expectations

Sustainable change must be owned by local actors. Therefore, building equitable, reliable and strong partnership with civil society organisations, public authorities and private sector, is a fundamental pillar of our engagement. Strong, self-determined local actors guarantee that development steps are locally anchored and designed to last.

Building upon our experience in developing capacities and pro-actively connecting organisations, private sector and public players, we promote the establishment of partnerships with national actors.

In 2024 we worked with:

National NGOs

- Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers' Association (BNWLA)
- Caritas Bangladesh
- Centre for Community Development Assistance (CCDA)

- Center for Natural Resource Studies (CNRS)
- Development Organisation of the Rural Poor (DORP)
- Democracywatch (DW)
- Jum Foundation
- Khan Foundation
- PRIP Trust
- Prottiyashi
- Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMU)
- Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP)
- Rupantar
- Uttaran

Private sector partners

- PRAN Agro Limited
- Rani Foods Industries Limited

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